

## **Lunch, Time to Recharge**

**How well does your lunch break serve you?** Do you typically spend it munching lunch at your desk or rushing through errands? Or maybe you often skip your break altogether? If so, you're missing out on a chance to reenergize for the rest of your day.

A lunch break mid-way through your work period can recharge you mentally and physically, boosting productivity and attitude. **Here are some energizing break-time ideas:**

Before or after eating a quick, healthy meal, you can take a midday nap, which can energize you longer than a cup of coffee; exercise at a nearby club; take a walk; and stretch or meditate. Or use the entire break to relax over lunch with co-workers or a friend – nothing like good conversation to put a positive spin on your day.

Whatever you do, don't skip a nutritious lunch – lack of food can lower concentration and alertness levels and invite fatigue, making the rest of your day less productive.

**Best brown bag picks?** The USDA suggests you include 2 whole-grain items; some lean protein, a fruit and vegetable; and a light dairy product. *Sample:* garden salad, half a turkey sandwich on whole-wheat and low-fat yogurt with granola. By contrast, digesting a heavy meal may slow you down. *Tip:* You'll find more healthy lunch ideas at [www.mypyramidtracker.gov/planner](http://www.mypyramidtracker.gov/planner).

**Make the most of your work break every day – you deserve it.** If you're concerned about missing time to work or catch up on your personal to-do list, think of the plus side: You'll increase your productivity and enjoy your day more after taking a breather.

[Cutline]

Lunch makeover: **Break away to a more traditional lunchtime – energizing food, good company and a walk in the fresh air.**

### **MORE INFO**

American Dietetic Association, [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)

#### Sources:

MyPyramid Menu Planner. MyPyramid.gov, 2008. Accessed 10/6/08 at [www.mypyramidtracker.gov/planner/](http://www.mypyramidtracker.gov/planner/).

"Think Outside the Lunchbox." American Dietetic Association. Accessed 10/6/08 at [www.eatright.org/cps/rde/xchg/ada/hs.xsl/home\\_14592\\_ENU\\_HTML.htm](http://www.eatright.org/cps/rde/xchg/ada/hs.xsl/home_14592_ENU_HTML.htm).

"Why the lunch break is going extinct." 8/20/07. MSNBC.com. Accessed on 9/22/08 at [www.msnbc.msn.com/id/20265063/page/2/print/1/displaymode/1098/](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/20265063/page/2/print/1/displaymode/1098/).

"Healthy makeover for your lunch." 11/11/07. Denverpost.com. Accessed on 10/6/08 at [www.denverpost.com/lifestyles/ci\\_7427567](http://www.denverpost.com/lifestyles/ci_7427567).

## BEST BITS

**Here's a Valentine's Day message to take to heart** – the pneumococcal shot helps protect cardiovascular health. In a Canadian study, **heart patients who received the shot were 50% less likely to experience a heart attack up to 2 years after vaccination.** The CDC recommends the pneumonia shot for anyone age 2 years and older who has chronic health problems, and people 65 and older.

### Sources:

"Pneumococcal vaccine associated with 50% lower risk of heart attacks." 9/30/08. CMAJ. Accessed on 10/7/08 at [www.cmaj.ca/press/index.html](http://www.cmaj.ca/press/index.html).

"Pneumococcal Vaccine Publications for Adults." CDC. Accessed on 10/8/08 at [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/pneumo/vac-pneumo-pubs.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/pneumo/vac-pneumo-pubs.htm).

**We need at least 2 to 6 1/2 cups of fruits and vegetables a day**, depending on age, gender and physical activity level. How much is in a cup? Find out at Fruits and Veggies Matter: [www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/what/index.html](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/what/index.html). You'll find plenty of examples, such as: An apple = 1 measuring cup, 6 baby carrots = 1/2 cup, and a handful of grapes (about 16) = 1/2 cup. Measure your portions for a few weeks until you know what a cup looks like.

### Source:

"What Counts as a Cup?" CDC, 2008. Accessed on 10/7/08 at [www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/what/index.html](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/what/index.html).

**What is your risk for heart attack?** The Framingham Risk Assessment Tool can estimate your heart attack risk during the next 10 years by looking at risk factors. The calculator is recommended for adults starting at age 20, who have not been diagnosed with heart disease or diabetes. Check your risk at <http://hp2010.nhlbihin.net/atpiii/calculator.asp>; discuss the results with your health care provider.

### Source:

"Risk Assessment Tool for Estimating Your 10-year Risk of Having a Heart Attack." National Heart Lung and Blood Institute. Accessed on 10/7/08 at <http://hp2010.nhlbihin.net/atpiii/calculator.asp>.

[Page 2]

SPECIAL REPORT

## 8 Ways to Protect Your Heart From Diabetes

**People with diabetes** are likelier to have heart disease than those with normal blood sugar levels. If you have been diagnosed with diabetes, self-care is key to staying well and leading a full life. Here are 8 steps you can take – with guidance from your health care provider – to keep your heart strong and avoid serious complications:

**1 Control blood sugar.** Tracking your blood glucose numbers is the key to preventing long-term health problems caused by diabetes. Using a blood glucose meter and the results of your A1C tests, you'll learn to control what makes your blood glucose rise and fall.

**2 Take the pressure off .** Check your blood pressure (BP) at home regularly. If you have high BP, follow your provider's treatment plan, which may include medication, weight loss and dietary changes. Goal: 130/80 if hypertensive; 120/80 or lower is considered normal.

**3 Aim for winning numbers.** Many people with diabetes have unhealthy cholesterol levels. Goals: LDL: <100 mg/dL + HDL: >50 mg/dL in women and 40 mg/dL in men + triglycerides: <less than 150 mg/dL. Some people can reach these targets just with lifestyle changes included in this list.

**4 Make physical activity a daily habit.** You can protect your heart and help stabilize blood sugar by accumulating 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise (beyond everyday physical chores) most days. Gradually increase the time and intensity of physical activity with your provider's guidance.

**5 Slim down.** Most people with diabetes are overweight. But losing even 5% to 7% of your weight or 15 pounds can help improve your blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Learn weight loss strategies that work for you – fit in more walks, eat smaller portions of high calorie favorites, or keep a record of your weight progress.

**6 Eat smart.** For better blood sugar, weight control and general health, enjoy foods full of nutrition and fiber – including fruits, vegetables, beans, fish and other lean protein foods. Limit salt and avoid high-fat and fried foods. Also, review your meal plan with a dietitian every 6 months or so. Alcohol? The American Diabetes Association recommends a limit of 2 drinks a day for men and 1 drink for women who have diabetes. Check with your provider before using alcohol.

**7 Consider aspirin.** A daily dose may help prevent blood clots, which can cause heart attack and stroke. Not everyone can tolerate daily aspirin, so consult your health care provider first.

**8 If you smoke, quit.** Smoking not only weakens your heart – it contributes to high blood sugar, high blood pressure and unhealthy cholesterol. You're the leading member of your diabetes care team – and the #1 step to better health is to stay informed and involved with your treatment. Diabetes is manageable with watchful care and a moderate lifestyle.

## **DIABETES BASICS: Are You At Risk?**

### **Primary risks include:**

- Excess weight (especially around the waist)
- High blood pressure
- HDL cholesterol under 35
- Age 45-plus
- Lack of exercise
- Family history of diabetes
- Ethnic background – African, Hispanic, Native, or Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders
- History of diabetes during pregnancy

**TESTING:** If you have diabetes risk factors, talk to your provider about getting tested. It is generally recommended at age 45 for everyone, or younger if at risk. A fasting blood glucose level of 100 to 125 mg/dL is considered pre-diabetes (higher than normal but not high enough for a diabetes diagnosis).

### **MORE INFO**

American Diabetes Association: [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)

#### **Sources:**

"4 Ways to Save Your Heart." ADA, 2008. Accessed 10/2/08 at [www.diabetes.org/food-nutrition-lifestyle/lifestyle-prevention/thriving-with-diabetes/twd-4-ways-to-save-your-heart.jsp](http://www.diabetes.org/food-nutrition-lifestyle/lifestyle-prevention/thriving-with-diabetes/twd-4-ways-to-save-your-heart.jsp).

"9 Ways to protect your heart from diabetes." Harvard HEALTHbeat, 2/08. Accessed 10/2/08 at <http://clicks.health.harvard.edu/dm?id=A184EE4C21DA477FB0F36313E1B6997867DF91FE799722B5>.

"Diabetes Symptoms." ADA, 2008. Accessed 10/2/08 at [www.diabetes.org/diabetes-symptoms.jsp](http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-symptoms.jsp).

"Hypertension in Diabetes." Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease Review, Issue 2, 2002. Accessed 10/8/08 at [www.diabetes.org/uedocuments/ADACardioReview\\_2.pdf](http://www.diabetes.org/uedocuments/ADACardioReview_2.pdf).

"Diabetes Risk Factors." NLM/NIH, 6/17/08. Accessed 10/2/08 at [www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/002072.htm](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/002072.htm).

[Page 3]

FITNESS GUIDELINES

## **Heart-Pumping Exercise**

**Aerobic activity offers the most fitness gains for your exercise time.**

**The new national guidelines for physical activity** issued in 2008 now recommend that Americans include aerobic exercise routinely to achieve the best overall health protection and fitness benefits. But don't be turned off by the label "aerobic" – it merely refers to activity that raises your heart rate.

**1. Aerobic activity can be performed easily.** It takes as little as 2 1/2 hours a week. Here is the basic recommendation for average adults under age 65:

**Do moderate-intensity aerobic activity 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week**, such as walking briskly, water aerobics, ballroom dancing and general gardening.

**OR**

**Do vigorous-intensity aerobic activity 20 minutes a day, 3 days a week**, such as racewalking, jogging, running, hiking uphill or aerobic machine workouts.

**Guidelines for aerobic activity:**

- It requires a minimum of 10 nonstop minutes to achieve a cardiovascular effect.
- You can satisfy your 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise in 3 10-minute bouts throughout the day.
- Experts now recommend that you do aerobic activity in addition to routine activities of daily living, which tend to be light intensity. **for your exercise time.**

**2. Aerobic activity can be very beneficial.** During moderate nonstop exercise, your heart rate increases and your muscles demand a continuous supply of oxygen to burn the energy stored in their cells. Within a few weeks, this training effect forces your body to use oxygen more efficiently, strengthening your heart, lungs, blood flow and virtually every system in your body.

A regular routine of aerobic activities is needed for cardiovascular fitness – and you can't beat it for boosting energy and protecting your heart and health in general. It directly fights obesity, diabetes, hypertension and high blood cholesterol, helps prevent colon and breast cancer, and may lengthen your life.

**3. Aerobic activity can be done with moderate or vigorous intensity.**

**Moderate-intensity** aerobic activity is generally equivalent to a brisk walk and noticeably speeds up your heart rate. *Key:* You should break a sweat, yet be able to carry on a conversation.

**Vigorous-intensity** aerobic activity is exemplified by jogging, and causes rapid breathing and a substantial increase in heart rate.

You can use combinations of both moderate and vigorous intensity. For example, walk briskly for 30 minutes twice a week and jog or use an elliptical machine at higher intensity on 2 other days.

Note: Consult your provider before starting or changing your exercise program if you are inactive or have a chronic condition.

[Cutline]

**Odds are aerobic activity will increase your energy and make you feel better almost immediately. Ultimately, it helps your heart pump more oxygen-rich blood with each beat. And that's the sign of a healthy heart! Happy Heart Month!**

Sources:

"HHS Announces Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans." HHS Press Office, 10/7/08. Accessed 10/7/08 at [www.hhs.gov/news/press/2008pres/10/20081007a.html](http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2008pres/10/20081007a.html).

"Physical Activity & Public Health Guidelines." American College of Sports Medicine (no date). Accessed 12/29/07 at [www.acsm.org/AM/PrinterTemplate.cfm?Section=Home\\_Page&TEMPLATE=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=7764](http://www.acsm.org/AM/PrinterTemplate.cfm?Section=Home_Page&TEMPLATE=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=7764).

"Physical Activity and Public Health: Updated Recommendations for Adults from the American College of Sports Medicine and the American Heart Association." Medicine & Science In Sports & Exercise, Special Communications, 2007.

**More is Better:** The 30-minute physical activity guideline is the minimum exercise level designed for average healthy adults to maintain their health and reduce risk of chronic disease. So, while a daily walk is important for general health, don't be shy about picking up your pace and extending the duration of your activities. In fact, to lose weight or maintain weight significantly increase your fitness level – aim for 60 to 90 most days of the week. If you can't always meet that goal, simply do 10 minutes of your regular aerobic activity at a more intense pace. In other words, some huff and puff.

**GOAL LINE Ways to get active:** Do some push-ups, extra chores or just move when you think about it; fitting in activity will soon become second nature.

[Page 4]

MENTAL WELL BEING

## **For Good Health, Feel Good About YOU**

**Studies point to the importance of positive thinking** for sound mental health. A positive attitude has also been linked to the physical side of health – it may boost immunity, aid recovery from heart surgery and various cancers, and help us overcome other ailments, such as pain and stomachache.

Still, viewing life on the bright side doesn't come naturally for everyone. It may take some intentional changes in how you view life and your own identity and self-image. Take a few minutes to reflect on your past and current achievements, and your life as a whole. **Start by studying your positive features with these 8 questions:**

- 1. What are your strengths?*
- 2. What do you enjoy?*
- 3. What would make you satisfied in life?*
- 4. Who are your favorite people?*
- 5. What makes you laugh?*
- 6. When was the last time you had a good laugh out loud?*
- 7. What are your greatest accomplishments?*
- 8. What do you have to look forward to in the future?*

**We all have weaknesses and traits we'd like to change.** At one time or another we wish we could be smarter or more successful. It's important to stay focused on your merits and nurture a healthy self-esteem. Never lose sight of your goodness and unique qualities – this knowledge will help you grow and succeed even through adverse times. **Hold your head up, smile and feel proud!**

Sources:

"Accentuate the Positive: Optimism & Your Health." Healthywomen.org. Accessed on 10/7/08 at [www.healthywomen.org/wellness/emotionalwellbeing/accentuatethepositiveoptimismandyourhealth](http://www.healthywomen.org/wellness/emotionalwellbeing/accentuatethepositiveoptimismandyourhealth).

"An exercise in optimism." BeWell Stanford Wellsphere. Accessed on 10/3/08 at <http://stanford.wellsphere.com/heart-health-article/an-exercise-in-optimism/239807>.

"Always Look on the Bright Side of Life?" 2/28/06. Nbc4.com. Accessed on 10/1/08 at <http://nbc4.healthology.com/mental-health/mental-health-information/article999.htm>.

## **Here's to Friendship**

**It enriches your life and helps protect your well-being.**

**Having friends and a rewarding social network** throughout life have been shown to extend lifespan. By contrast, becoming socially isolated or "homebound" may produce negative health effects including high blood pressure, obesity and smoking, according to research.

What's the secret to lasting friendships? It takes some (worthwhile) effort.

**Being a good friend starts with you.** People are comfortable around friends who are honest and sincere. Respect your friends' boundaries and don't smother them. Stay positive – remember the last time you were around a constant complainer? Be a good listener; recall past conversations and check in routinely. Meet in a variety of places you'll both enjoy, whether it's over coffee or a round of golf.

**Finding friends is easier than you might think.** Seek opportunities in your routine: Talk to someone you see often at the gym, ask a co-worker to lunch, accept invitations whenever possible, volunteer, find old classmates, join or start a team sport, or invite neighbors over. Not all good friends go way back to childhood – the best ones are those with whom you share commonalities and can laugh.

Celebrate friendships old and new this Valentine's Day and every day. They make the world a better place.

Sources:

"Making and Keeping Friends." SAMHSA's National Mental Health Information Center. Accessed on 9/23/08 at <http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/sma-3716/making.asp>.

"Friendships: Enrich your life and improve your health." Mayo Clinic. Accessed on 9/23/08 at [www.mayoclinic.com/health/friendships/MH00125](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/friendships/MH00125).

**GOAL LINE Pounds creeping back?** Watch the nibbles and sweets, add 5 minutes to your daily walk, and weigh daily to get back on track.

[Page 5]

HEALTH CARE MATTERS

## **Cholesterol Myths & Facts**

**Controlling cholesterol levels is vital** to keeping your heart strong and arteries clear. But what do you really know about this critical factor in cardiovascular health? Chances are some of what you think is true, isn't. Consider these popular myths:

***Myth:* Cholesterol is a fat.**

***Fact:*** Cholesterol is a sterol. Sterols are waxy, fat-like substances whose chemical structure differs from true fats.

***Myth:* Cholesterol has no health benefits.**

***Fact:*** We need some cholesterol – it's essential to human cells and hormones such as estrogen, cortisol and testosterone.

***Myth:* If you follow a strict vegetarian food plan, your body will produce little**

## **cholesterol.**

**Fact:** Everyone, regardless of eating habits, weight or exercise level, produces cholesterol. In fact, your liver makes about two-thirds of the cholesterol in your body.

*Tip:* Studies suggest the more saturated and trans fats you eat, the more cholesterol your liver puts into your blood.

### ***Myth: Cholesterol is good or bad.***

**Fact:** Cholesterol is all the same, whether it's in your cells or food. What differentiates cholesterol is the blood proteins, which move cholesterol through our bodies.

Cholesterol with high-density lipoproteins (HDLs) is "good" because it removes the "bad" cholesterol deposited on artery walls by low-density lipoproteins (LDL). In other words, a high HDL level fights harmful LDL.

### ***Myth: Athletes and other very active people don't have unhealthy cholesterol.***

**Fact:** Anyone can have abnormal cholesterol levels, even professional athletes. A family history of unhealthy cholesterol is one risk factor for cholesterol problems, regardless of how much you exercise.

*Tip:* We all need cholesterol screening. Depending on your health, you may need more frequent checks.

#### **Sources:**

"Lower the "Bad" Cholesterol for Your Own Good." Harvard Health Beat, 3/5/08. Accessed <http://clicks.health.harvard.edu/dm?id=A184EE4C21DA477F514F93F4EE7891AEB824F9DD798A7CB7>.

"Common Misconceptions About Cholesterol." AHA, 4/4/08. Accessed 9/26/08 at [www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3006030](http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3006030).

"Lowering cholesterol ... How low should you go?" Harvard Health Beat, 4/17/08. Accessed [www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/HEALTHbeat\\_041708.htm](http://www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/HEALTHbeat_041708.htm).

## **Hands-On Facts About Physical Therapy**

**Physical therapy is a specialty** dedicated to helping people regain their physical strength and function. Here are some questions you might have about this practice.

**What are physical therapists?** They are health care providers accredited to practice physical therapy. They diagnose and treat people with conditions that limit the ability to move or to perform daily activities.

Their primary goal is to promote healing after injury or disease, using a variety of techniques to reduce pain, restore function and movement, and avoid disability or loss of mobility before it occurs.

**What does treatment involve?** Hands-on therapy may include joint manipulation and muscle or soft tissue massage. A therapist will often prescribe an individualized exercise plan with precise instructions and training schedule.

**What conditions may benefit?** Physical therapists are experts in providing care for musculoskeletal problems. Low back pain, dislocations, and sports injuries are common examples.

Other conditions treated by physical therapists include workplace injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome; neurological disorders such as stroke; and poor physical

**How to choose a physical therapist?** Start with your health care provider, who will typically be the one to refer you. Before your visit, check your health plan's requirements for referrals, preferred providers, and covered benefits.

### **More Info**

American Physical Therapy Association, [www.apta.org](http://www.apta.org)

#### Sources:

"The physical therapist." American Physical Therapy Association, 2008. Accessed on 9/25/08 at [www.apta.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Physical\\_Therapy&TEMPLATE=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=33205](http://www.apta.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Physical_Therapy&TEMPLATE=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=33205).

"Discovering physical therapy." American Physical Therapy Association, 2008. Accessed on 9/25/08 at [www.apta.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Consumers1&Template=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&ContentID=39568](http://www.apta.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Consumers1&Template=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&ContentID=39568).

"Choosing a physical therapist." American Physical Therapy Association, 2008. Accessed on 9/25/08 at [www.apta.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Choosing\\_a\\_PT1&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=48&ContentID=31448](http://www.apta.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Choosing_a_PT1&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=48&ContentID=31448).

[Page 6]

## **SAFETY SOLUTIONS**

### **Avoiding Car Wrecks**

**There's more to good driving** than obeying traffic laws. Awareness and good judgment can save you from injury and worse on the road. Test your driving safety smarts.

#### **1. Most motor vehicle crashes occur at intersections.**

☐ True ☐ False

#### **2. The far left lane is usually safer than the center lane.**

☐ True ☐ False

#### **3. The 9 and 3 o'clock positions are the safest places for your hands while driving.**

☐ True ☐ False

**4. Properly maintaining your vehicle can decrease your risk of collision.**

☐ True ☐ False

**5. The least safe time of day to drive is the morning rush hour.**

☐ True ☐ False

**6. Which of the following is safe to do while driving?**

- a. eating
- b. talking on a hands-free cell phone
- c. reading
- d. none of the above

**7. In dry conditions what is the minimum safe distance between your car and the vehicle ahead of you?**

- a. 1 car per 10 mph you are driving
- b. 2 cars per 10 mph you are driving
- c. 1 car per 15 mph you are driving
- d. none of the above

**Answers:**

1. *True.* Look left, right, left before moving through intersections. Check for red light runners and pedestrians.

2. *False.* Most mishaps occur in the left lane. The center lane provides more “escape routes” to avoid collisions.

3. *True.* Keeping your hands at “9 and 3” provides maximum control if you have to react quickly to avoid other vehicles or pedestrians.

4. *True.* Sticking to your car’s recommended maintenance schedule to ensure it operates properly.

5. *False.* In the dark, hazards are less visible and drivers are more likely to be tired or drunk. Always use your headlights and practice extra caution.

6. *d.* Driving distracted is a major cause of collisions. If you must do anything that diverts your full attention while driving, pull off the road to a safe place.

7. *a.* In wet conditions, double this distance and slow down.

**More Info**

NHSTA, [www.safercar.gov](http://www.safercar.gov)

Sources:

"Distraction." NHTSA. Accessed on 10/1/08 at [www.nhtsa.dot.gov/portal/site/nhtsa/template.MAXIMIZE/menuitem.346aef7b3d1b54c5cb6aab30343c44cc/?javax.portlet.tpst=4670b93a0b088a006bc1d6b760008a0c\\_ws\\_MX&javax.portlet.prp\\_4670b93a0b088a006bc1d6b760008a0c\\_viewID=detail\\_view&itemID=97b964d168516110VgnVCM100002fd17898RCRD&overrideViewName=Article](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/portal/site/nhtsa/template.MAXIMIZE/menuitem.346aef7b3d1b54c5cb6aab30343c44cc/?javax.portlet.tpst=4670b93a0b088a006bc1d6b760008a0c_ws_MX&javax.portlet.prp_4670b93a0b088a006bc1d6b760008a0c_viewID=detail_view&itemID=97b964d168516110VgnVCM100002fd17898RCRD&overrideViewName=Article).

"Ten Smart Safety Habits." 2007. Auto Safety Hub. Accessed on 9/10/08 at [www.autosafetyhub.org](http://www.autosafetyhub.org).

"Top 10 Editors' Tips to Prevent a Car Accident." 2008. Edmunds.com. Accessed 9/23/08 at [www.edmunds.com/reviews/list/top10/107098/article.html](http://www.edmunds.com/reviews/list/top10/107098/article.html).

## **Living Unleaded**

**The danger of lead exposure** may seem like a thing of the past. After all, common products such as house paint have been lead-free for years.

Yet about 40% of all U.S. homes contain lead with potentially toxic effects, especially for children; unborn children are at highest risk. About 1 in 20 children have high lead levels in their blood.

Lead poisoning symptoms in children include vomiting, sluggishness, irritability and learning difficulties. Adults may suffer from headaches, mood disorders, memory loss and weak muscles.

Lead is ingested or inhaled from sources, such as lead dust from stripping or sanding lead house paint (made before 1978); contaminated paint chips; water from old lead pipes; and paint in imported items.

### **Preventive measures:**

- Read labels before buying anything.
- Avoid products made outside the U.S. such as candies, children's items, and canned goods.
- For cooking, drinking and baby formula, run cold water from the tap for at least a minute before using; hot water is likelier to have higher lead levels.
- Outside your home, avoid areas with chipping or peeling paint, such as playground equipment.
- Keep dust under control.
- Wash hands before eating.

### **Sources:**

"Tips to prevent lead exposure." CDC, 8/31/07. Accessed 9/18/08 at [www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/faq/tips.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/faq/tips.htm).

"Lead Poisoning." Medline Plus, 4/19/07. Accessed 9/18/08 at [www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/print/ency/article/002473.htm](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/print/ency/article/002473.htm).

**GOAL LINE** When **tobacco cravings kick in**, write down your feelings and what's going on. It helps ease tension and reinforces your self-worth.

[Page 7]  
EATING SMART

## **Slick Guide to Cooking Oils**

*By Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP*

**Grocery shelves are packed** with a huge assortment of vegetable oils – no wonder shoppers are puzzled by what to buy when comparing cooking oils. Next time you shop for cooking oils, carry some basic facts with you.

**Olive oil** – the best all-round oil for cooking and salads, flavor and affordability. It's rich in monounsaturated fat, which lowers LDL (bad) cholesterol, helps boost HDL (good) cholesterol, and has been shown to improve heart health.

*Tip:* The antioxidants in extra virgin olive oil are valued for their possible role in helping prevent cancer and other chronic ailments.

**Canola oil** – an excellent inexpensive choice when you need a cooking oil with neutral taste. Pressed from rapeseed, a relative of the mustard plant, canola oil contains mostly monounsaturated fat. It also provides essential omega-3 fatty acids.

**Peanut oil** – a good source of monounsaturated fat and vitamin E. The high smoke point (see box, below) makes it suitable for hot cooking such as popping popcorn, sautéing and roasting.

**Sesame** – available raw or roasted. This polyunsaturated oil gives a distinctive Asian tang especially suited to vegetable stir-fry and chicken, shrimp and lean meat dishes.

**Nut oils** – refined options are best for low-temperature baking (see box, below). Unrefined oils add a mild, nutty flavor to vinaigrettes and vegetable toppings. Walnut, hazelnut and macadamia nut are a few distinctive types.

**Polyunsaturated oils** – considered less desirable for cooking, these oils are unstable and can easily break down when heated. This alteration can lead to the formation of free radicals, reactive molecules linked to cancer, heart disease and aging. Examples of these

oils, which are best consumed in moderation, include sesame, sunflower, soy, safflower, grape seed and corn oils.

## Matching Oil With Temperature

To avoid negative health effects from cooking fats, heat oils well below their smoke point – the temperature at which an oil starts to smoke during cooking. **Guidelines:**

High-heat cooking, such as sautéing and stir-frying – choose a refined oil such as peanut, sunflower, soybean, safflower, grape seed or extra light olive.

Lower-temperature methods, such as dressings, sauces, marinades and baking at less than 350°F – consider unrefined nut, peanut or sesame oils, extra virgin olive oil, or semi-refined canola oil.

Sources:

“Choose and use healthy fats.” American Institute for Cancer Research Newsletter, Winter 2007, Issue 94, p. 10.

“Ask Dr. Weil.” Prevention, 8/05, p. 93-94.

“Time for an oil change?” Health, July/August 2004, p. 186-192.

## RECIPE OF THE MONTH

### Spinach Pesto

**Pesto is a special condiment that adds healthful monounsaturated fat to your diet.**

You can mix it with pasta, spoon over grilled chicken or fish or spread on sandwiches.

Using spinach rather than basil creates a mild pesto, or try a mix of spinach and fresh basil, which adds a spicy aroma and flavor.

4 cups **baby spinach**, washed (or 3 cups spinach and 1 cup fresh basil)

1/4 cup **walnuts**

2 cloves **garlic**

1/4 cup **Parmesan cheese**

1/8 tsp **salt**

1/8 tsp **pepper**

1/3 cup **olive oil**

1/4 tsp **lemon rind** (zest)

1 tsp fresh **lemon juice**

1/3 cup **water**

1 In a food processor combine spinach, walnuts, garlic, cheese, salt and pepper and process until roughly chopped.

2 Slowly pour olive oil combined with lemon rind and lemon juice into processor while

blending.

3 Add water the same way until the paste is smooth and thick.

4 Remove from processor and store in fridge or freezer.

**MAKES 6 SERVINGS (1/4 cup each):**

**PER 1/4 CUP:** 163 calories | 3.5g protein | 16.3g fat | 2.6g saturated fat | 4mg cholesterol  
1.8g carbs | 0.8g fiber | 129mg sodium

[Page 8]

**EXPERT ADVICE**

**Q Soft drink drawbacks?**

**A Sugar-laden soft drinks** are considered one major source of extra calories that has contributed to the nation's obesity epidemic. But there may be other drawbacks with both regular and calorie-free pop. A recent Framingham Heart Study revealed that participants who drank 1 or more diet or regular soft drinks a day had a 44% greater risk for metabolic syndrome than those who did not. Metabolic syndrome is a cluster of symptoms that together increase heart disease risk.

However, this does not prove that avoiding soft drinks will prevent health problems. Scientists note that many drinkers of diet and regular beverages, like the study participants, tend to be sedentary and eat more high-fat, high-calorie foods – 2 known risks for heart disease. More research is needed to clarify the role of soft drinks in health.

**Best advice:** Enjoy soft drinks in moderation. Make most of your beverages low- or no-calorie, such as water or fat-free or low fat milk.

Sources:

"American Heart Association statement on Framingham Study on soft drink consumption." AHA, 7/23/07. Accessed 9/24/08 at

"Adults Drinking Soft Drinks At Increased Risk of Developing Metabolic Syndrome." NIH, 8/10/07. Accessed 9/17/08 at [www.nih.gov/news/radio/aug2007/08102007soda.htm](http://www.nih.gov/news/radio/aug2007/08102007soda.htm).

"Soft Drink Consumption and Risk of Developing Cardiometabolic Risk Factors and the Metabolic Syndrome in Middle-Aged Adults in the Community." AHA, 7/31/07. Accessed 9/17/08 at [www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3050553](http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3050553).

**Q Fiber for weight loss?**

**A Eating fruits, vegetables and whole grains** rich in fiber can help you lose weight and keep it off, according to studies.

Researchers at Tufts University in Boston found that participants who consumed

larger amounts of fiber took in about 200 fewer calories a day than those who did not. Those who continued the high-fiber programs lost about one-third of a pound a week, or 17 pounds in a year.

In other studies, participants who combined a high-fiber diet with portion control and exercise did even better. The weight loss averaged 1 to 2 pounds a week.

**Fiber assists weight loss in these ways:**

- **High-fiber foods** are usually chewy. Chewing slows eating and allows time for your stomach's "I'm full" signal to reach your brain, so you eat less.
- **High-fiber foods** digest slowly, resulting in steadier blood sugar levels, which help reduce food cravings, fatigue and possibly fat storage.
- **High-fiber foods** have fewer calories than low-fiber foods of the same weight. And the greater volume helps you feel fuller, longer.

Source: Fiber Up, Slim Down Cookbook. Rodale, 2008.

**QUICK STUDIES**

**Even modest weight loss makes a difference in treating type 2 diabetes.** Losing about 10% of body weight within an average of 18 months after a type 2 diagnosis helps people reach desirable blood sugar and blood pressure levels, according to a study published last August in *Diabetes Care*. Researchers found that blood sugar and blood pressure remained improved 3 years after diagnosis, even if participants regained the weight.

**Almost all adults who have type 2 are overweight and more than half are obese.**

Obesity is linked to heart disease risk factors, including poor blood sugar control.

Source:

"Early Weight Loss Reaps Long-term Benefits for Type 2 Diabetes." ADA, 8/12/08. Accessed 10/7/08 at [www.diabetes.org/for-media/pr-early-weightloss-reaps-long-term-benefits-for-type-2-diabetes.jsp](http://www.diabetes.org/for-media/pr-early-weightloss-reaps-long-term-benefits-for-type-2-diabetes.jsp).

**Educating arthritis patients about exercise helps them stay physically active.** Patients who were advised about exercise by health care providers had reduced pain and better physical functioning, according to a recent Missouri University study. Patients also noticed improved mental health and greater muscle strength. Arthritis is the top cause of disability in the U.S. and the CDC predicts increases in the coming decades.

Source:

"Incorporating Education in Exercise Programs Increases Benefits for Arthritis Patients, MU Researchers Find." MU, 10/8/08. Accessed 10/8/08 at [www.munews.missouri.edu/news-releases/2008/1008-conn-minor-arthritis.php](http://www.munews.missouri.edu/news-releases/2008/1008-conn-minor-arthritis.php).